

8 July 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Komer Report

1. Carver's memorandum on Komer's report, requested by you, already contains the most significant observations I had to make, which are incorporated in Carver's paragraphs 4, 5, and 6. A couple of additional points are, I believe, still worthy of note.

2. Komer still obviously does not really understand the "mix" of doctrine and intimate support and follow-through that CIA gave this activity from its inception in 1964. That this mix has been successful was by no means due only to CIA flexibility; fundamentally it was a function of our more incisive understanding of the nature of armed Communist subversion, and the means necessary to combat it. Flexibility helps, but that is by no means the main factor. Komer errs in seizing on a going and successful program (without comprehending the doctrine behind it) and now laying almost total emphasis on allocation of resources and the assignment of priorities. Obviously in a large program these factors are weighty ones, but Komer, in good American tradition, goes after the organizational aspects but, I fear, neglects the substance.

3. Particularly is this evident in his conclusions that there should be, at the province level, the "single boss" who (whether or not he understands the techniques and the objectives) will nonetheless have practical command authority over those who do understand. Further, he sees MACV as the logical entity to exercise this broad supervisory authority at the lower levels. Should this come to pass, I predict that the rural pacification effort will lose its momentum and come to a halt, that successful doctrine will be abandoned, and that the gradual militarization of native elements engaged in pacification will take place. That will mean the end of any hopes of rural security. If we have learned any

lesson in the past two years, it is certainly the lesson that the military establishment is incapable of contesting the armed guerrilla subversion of the Viet Cong throughout the countryside. If we ignore this lesson, and if Komer's line of thought obtains, I predict failure in this effort and the negation of our classic military victories.

4. All in all, I find these aspects of Komer's report really depressing and discouraging. His remarks on port congestion, land tenure, etc., I find unremarkable but useful observations on categories of problems with which we are not unfamiliar. On the pacification side, however, I find his views, and those he imputes to Westmoreland, appalling.

PEER DE SILVA
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

Attachments

PDSilva:mee

Orig & 1 - DCI

1 - Komer RD File ✓

1 - C/SAVA Chrono

1 - VAS Chrono